Complete Music for Two Trumpets

Erik Satie



edited by
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Erik Satie (1919 and 1921)

Introduction

Satie's interest in the trumpet dates from his late post-war period and seems to have been stimulated by commissions from avant-garde ephemeral journals. Thus the tiny *Marche de Cocagne* of November 1919 appeared as a frontispiece for Bertrand Guégan's *Almanach de Cocagne pour l'An* 1920 (on page 7 beneath a woodcut by Raoul Dufy), and the *Sonnerie pour réveiller le bon gros Roi des Singes (lequel qui ne dort toujours que d'un oeil)* appeared in the first number of Leigh Henry's journal *Fanfare* on 1 October 1921, alongside three others by Granville Bantock, Manuel de Falla and Eugène Goossens on pages 10-11. Joseph Holbrooke, Poulenc, Prokofiev and Sir Arthur Bliss contributed fanfares to issue No. 2, and a selection of these (including Satie's) were performed at the opening of Goossens' orchestral concert at the Queen's Hall, London on 27 October 1921.

One interesting sideline is that Guégan originally sent Satie a poem to set for his Almanach, and it was only because Satie felt he needed more than a few weeks to do this properly, that he substituted his little Marche de Cocagne, which had originally been written for the group of artists who met at Adrienne Monnier's Latin Quarter bookshop *'La Maison des Amis des Livres'* who were dubbed the *'Potassons'* after the poet Léon-Paul Fargue's fat cat, whose exploits Satie also celebrated in the last of his *Ludions* song cycle in 1923. He then used his extrovert, chromatic march to form the outer sections of the second of his *Trois Petites Piecès montées* whose orchestration he completed in late January 1920.

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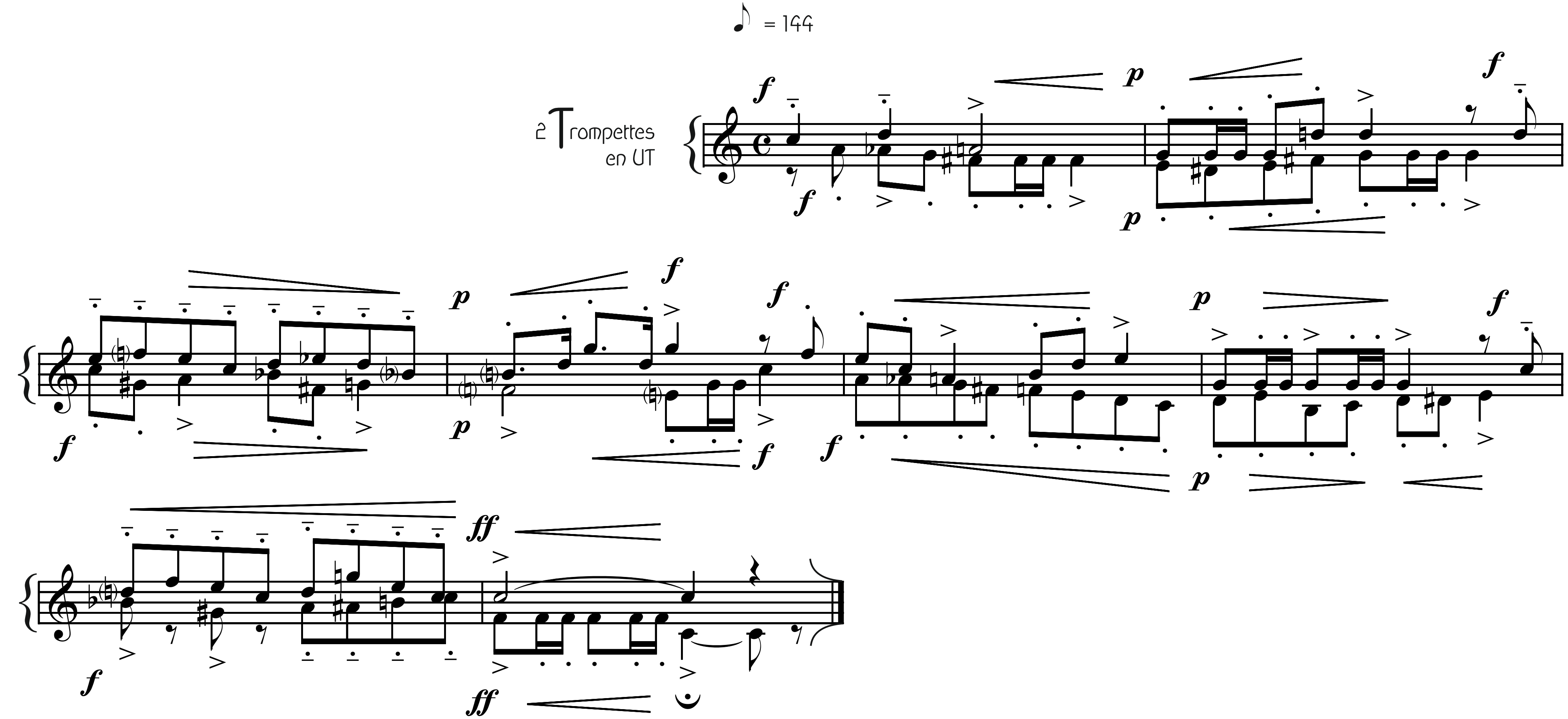
The lengthy title *Fanfare for the good old King of the Monkeys (who only ever sleeps with one eye)* might seem both bizarre and disproportionate for such a tiny piece, unless we know that Satie was fascinated by eyes and their power and especially by the concept of the single eye. The plot of his surrealist play *Le Piège de Méduse* (1913) revolves around Astolfo's ability to 'dance with one eye' and Satie reported in his article *'The Musician's Day'* that 'My sleep is deep, but I keep one eye open'. While many of his single eye references appear humorous or whimsical on the surface, some have more sinister associations with the evil eye of the devil or the all-seeing eye of ancient Egyptian mythology. In the text of 'Méditation', the last of the *Avant-dernières pensées* of 1915, the devil is mistaken for the wind of genius passing by, who gazes on the poet/creator 'with an evil eye: a glass eye'. Satie, who believed himself haunted by the devil, was the poet in question. So, this little *Sonnerie* is a deeper and more personal piece than one might expect, and it is also a rare example of a Satie piece that survived in its original contrapuntal conception (including a canon at the third by inversion which is suddenly left high and dry in bar 8, followed by invertible counterpoint in bars 9-12). Satie had learned his craft at the Schola Cantorum well, but his natural sense of proportion and occasion told him to make his last four bars more straightforward and climactic, though sufficiently quirky in harmonic terms to identify him unmistakably as their author. Who would ever imagine that the *Sonnerie* was originally written in D major and gained its brightness and essential character through a last-minute upward transposition - a stroke of genius?

Robert Orledge 2011

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Marche de Cocagne
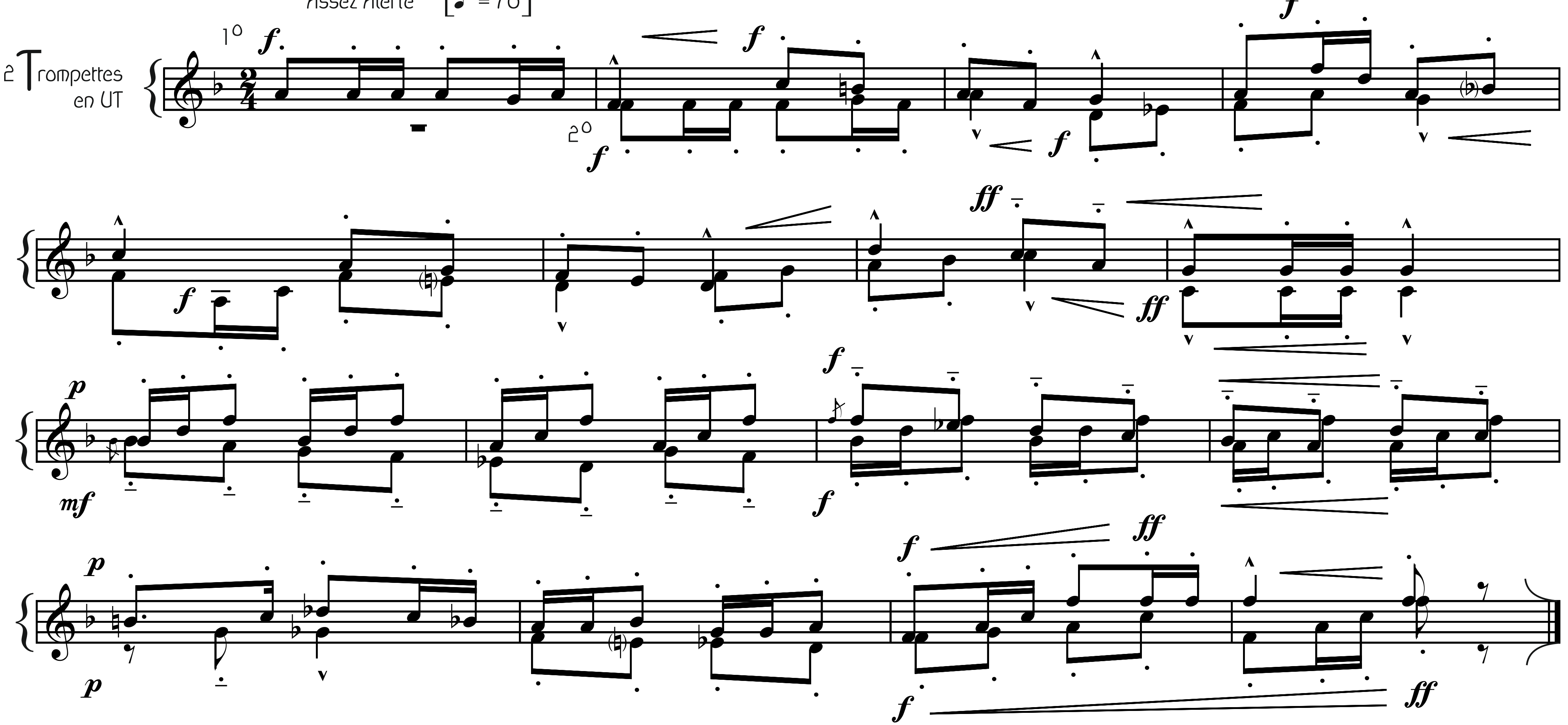


Erik Satie
Nov. 1919

Sonnerie

pour réveiller le bon gros Roi des Singes
(lequel ne dort toujours que d'un œil)

Mouvement de Marche (sur les pieds)

Assez Alerte [♩ = 76]



Erik Satie
30 Août 1921

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The cover image is *Object of Destruction (Copy)* by Jimmy Dove. It depicts a copy of a work by Man Ray. Originally the work was made (early 1920s) as *Object to be Destroyed*. This original work was, in fact, destroyed in 1957 by a group calling itself the *Jarivistes* who took it from a gallery into the street and shot it with a pistol. Man Ray subsequently made 100 copies and gave the new work the name *Indestructible Object*. Less well known perhaps is a "conceptual" version from 1932 called *Object of Destruction* from the journal *The Quarter* edited by André Breton. This version consists of a drawing and instructions on how to make it. Satie was a friend of Man Ray and admired his work. He helped him make his first Parisian 'ready-made', called *Cadeau* (a flat-iron with nails glued to the base) on 3 December 1921.